

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 13-31, 33-36 and 38-49 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 10, 18-21, 24 and 35 are amended and claims 12, 32-34 and 37 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the amendments a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth below; b) do not raise any new reasons that require further search and/or consideration; and/or c) place the application in better form for an appeal, should an appeal be necessary. More specifically, the above amendments incorporate allowable subject matter into the independent claims and/or rewrites allowable dependent claims into independent form. No new issues are provided requiring further search and/or consideration. Entry is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 12, 15, 18-20, 23-26 and 37 contain allowable subject matter and claims 1-9, 27-31 and 38-46 are allowed.

By this Amendment, independent claim 10 is amended to include features of dependent claim 12, dependent claim 18 is rewritten in independent form, dependent claim 20 is rewritten in independent form and independent claim 21 is amended to include features of dependent claim 26. Additionally, dependent claim 24 is rewritten in independent form and independent claim 35 is amended to include features of dependent claim 37. Thus, each of independent claims 10, 18, 20, 21, 24 and 35 contain allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 10-11, 13-14, 16-17, 21-22, 32-36 and 47-49 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,590,133 to Billstrom et al. (hereafter Billstrom) in view of U.S. Patent 5,850,391 to Essigmann. The rejection is respectfully traversed as Billstrom and

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Essignmann do not teach or suggest all the features of independent claims 10, 18, 20, 21, 24 and 35.

Each of the dependent claims depends from one of the independent claims and therefore defines patentable subject matter at least for this reason. In addition, the dependent claims also recite features that further and independently distinguish over the applied references.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11, 13-31, 33-36 and 38-49 are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, **David C. Oren**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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